

The Three Investigators – ‘Sherlock Holmes’ for Children?

1. **Who are *The Three Investigators*?**

- three boys aged 13-14, later 17, live in Rocky Beach, California (Arthur, “Green Ghost” 5)
- first investigator Jupiter Jones is “stocky, muscular, and a bit roly-poly [. . .], has an excellent mind, and he is rather proud of it” (7)
- second investigator Pete Crenshaw is “tall, brown haired, muscular [and] capable of many athletic feats” (7)
- Bob Andrews is responsible for records and research and has “a part-time job at the local library” (67;7)
- they are “Volunteer Junior Assistant Deput[ies] co-operating with the police force of Rocky Beach” (154)
- other important characters: Chief Reynolds, Inspector Cotta, Victor Hugenay and Skinner “Skinny” Norris, Mathilda Jones and Titus Jones
- written by Robert Arthur starting in 1964, continued as *The Three Investigators – Crime Busters* by several authors published by Random House and where later continued by German authors published by Kosmos
- Alfred Hitchcock consented to give his name to make the series more popular (7) , he also appears as a character in the first books and occasionally has cases for them to solve

2. **Similarities to Sherlock Holmes**

- Jupiter Jones
 - is often called Sherlock Holmes (Buchna 01:40), sometimes not in a nice way: “Well, if it isn’t Fatso Sherlock Holmes and the two dumb bloodhounds” (Arden, “Aztekenschwert” 01:12)
 - reveals his deductions for everyone at the end of the stories (Arden, “rätselhaften Bilder”/ Arthur, “flüsternde Mumie”)
 - once outsmarted by a girl called Brittany (Marx, “Erbe des Meisterdiebs”), Pete compares Brittany in a different case with Irene Adler (Erlhoff, 67)
- Bob Andrews
 - keeps records of all cases e.g. in *Der Fluch der Sheldon Street*
 - *und der Nebelberg* is partly written from Bob’s perspective
- Peter Crenshaw
 - helps the reader to understand certain aspects :”Long words Jones! You know I don’t know what mundane means.” (Arthur, “Green Ghost” 25)
- other similarities
 - *The Three Investigators* use the “Ghost-to-Ghost Hookup”, which enables them to get into contact with all other children in their neighbourhood via telephone => nobody notices children
 - “Ghost-to-Ghost Hookup” is similar to the system of Baker Street Irregulars “[t]hey can go everywhere, see everything, overhear everyone” (Doyle, “Sign of Four” 65)

- Sherlock Holmes is sometimes mentioned himself and even helps with solving a case “when I thought about that dog, I remembered a dog in one of the Sherlock Holmes stories” (Arthur, “Green Ghost” 156), Jupiter refers to the dog that didn’t bark in the short story *Silver Blaze*
- *The Mystery of the Fiery Eye* also refers to Sherlock Holmes => a man is said to have liked Sherlock Holmes (Arthur, “Fluch des Rubins” 35) and therefore the Investigators deduce that he has hidden a treasure in one of 13 busts (58-59), like the famous black pearl of the Borgias was hidden in one of six busts of Napoleon (Doyle, “Six Napoleons” 195)
- typically, the trio happens upon a mystery as in *und das Hexenhandy* or are employed by someone as in *The Mystery of the Invisible Dog*, hunt for clues which help them, solve the case and often capture a criminal and later explain how they solved the case to anyone who is around, typically Jupiter explains most of it => similar to the typical structure of the Sherlock Holmes stories (Fleischhack 217)

3. “Botschaft aus der Unterwelt”

- Kari Erhoff’s book is about a character who calls himself “Professor James Moriarty”, Jupiter “Holmes” and Bob and Pete “two Watsons” (Erlhoff 22-23)
- the titles of the chapters are titles of novels and short stories about Sherlock Holmes
- to solve the case the trio needs to find out more about Doyle’s texts, including the abbreviations of the stories (49-50) and Irene Adler (67)
- the final chapter involves Jupiter and Moriarty, who is actually called Mr. Grey, falling down an artificial waterfall, but both survive in the end (199 ff.), which is a strong hint to Doyle’s short story *The Final Problem*
- the last duel between Jupiter and Mr. Grey is fought out by playing chess (113 ff.)

4. *The Hardy Boys* and *The Famous Five*

- *The Hardy Boys* is a book series, first published in the US in 1927 under the collective pseudonym Franklin W. Dixon
 - Frank and Joe Hardy are teenage brothers (Dixon, 1ff.)
 - their father Tentson Hardy is a private detective, is “impossible to keep any secret from” (19) and they help each other out with the case (20-21, 44, 83 ff.), he is the one who catches the thief (100 ff.), but encourages his sons to look for the stolen treasure by themselves (119)
 - they often receive help from their friends (41ff., 108ff.)
 - competitor : Detective Oscar Smuff (116)
- *The Famous Five* is a book series by Enid Blyton, first published in Great Britain in 1942
 - 4 children: the siblings Julius, Anne and Richard and their cousin Georgina, called Georg and Georg’s dog called Tim (Blyton, 7)
 - they go on many adventures during their summer holidays (8)
 - sometimes they come into contact with criminals and report about that to the police (176 ff.)

5. Questions

- Why do you think children like detective fiction ?
- What should be different in children's detective fiction as opposed to detective fiction for adults? (Or, in case you know *The Three Investigators*, what are important differences?)

6. Sources

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